

From: John Brockman <[REDACTED]>

To: Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>

Subject: young people

Date: Sun, 05 Sep 2010 13:55:37 +0000

Inline-Images: Jacquet_Berlin.jpg; Morality1.jpg; Morality2.jpg; Morality3.jpg

Eastover Farm
[REDACTED]

JE,

A twofer. Jennifer Jacquet & Josh Knobe.

Jacquet is very bright. She has a piece in NATURE this week (pdf attached). Her essay in Max's book: "Is Shame Necessary". Description below. And she's also something of a wise-ass. See her email

Max signed up Josh Knobe to do an essay for the book. Description below.

JB

[REDACTED] mobile
(sent from my private email account [REDACTED])



"Balancing group and self-interest has never been easy. As pre-historic humans grappled with cooperation, social norms developed, new emotions like empathy and shame evolved, and the human brain became more powerful to keep track of the rules and the people who followed them. Today, as industrialization increasingly replaces wilderness, we are faced with the additional challenge of balancing human interests and the interests of non-human life. But our society is so big, so consumptive, and so fast-paced that its dimensions have outgrown our brains. The only way we can keep track of cooperation in a group this size is by outsourcing some of our cognitive demands to computers. We can use computers to simulate some of the intimacy of tribal life but we need humans to evoke the shame that led to cooperation. In a culture of godlessness, unbridled positivity, and rewards for behaving selfishly, can we rediscover and prudently use shame? Hopefully the same feeling that once aided in our own evolutionary success can now prevent us from failing the other species in life's fabric."

From: Jennifer Jacquet <[REDACTED]>
Date: September 4, 2010 3:34:02 PM EDT
To: John Brockman <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Morality...

Dear JB,
It's a lazy Saturday and I am finally getting around to my painfully disorganized computer dock. The benefit of keeping tens of screens open at a time is that sometimes you discover real and alternate outcomes as the Edgeverse evolves. Perhaps guilt and shame would have fit into the discussion!?

He he.

Jennifer

[REDACTED]. Please don't regret adding me the list. I am enjoying it all very much.



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An Edge Seminar



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Sam Harris, Marc D. Hauser, Josua Knobe,
Elizabeth Phelps, David Pizarro

The Mayflower Inn
Washington, CT
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Tuesday July 20 - Thursday, July 22, 2010



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Josh Knobe Essay Description

"Suppose that you look around you and see four things: a human being, a fish, a toaster, and a printer cartridge. Looking at these four things, you might immediately detect a fundamental difference between them. Specifically, you would attribute a mind to the human being, perhaps also to the fish, but definitely not to the toaster or the printer cartridge.

"This distinction comes so naturally to us that it is easy just to take it for granted, but if you stop to think about it for a moment, it begins to seem deeply puzzling. How exactly do people decide which things have minds and which do not? Most of us don't have much background in experimental psychology, cognitive neuroscience or any of the scientific disciplines that might be relevant to a question like this one. Yet, somehow if we see a fish swimming in the pond and then see a toaster popping up some toast, we immediately have the intuition that the former might have certain mental states but that the latter most definitely does not. How might we be doing this?

"Early work on this question assumed that people were engaged in some kind of purely rational reflection, something more or less like what one might find in a scientific investigation. But more recent studies have been questioning this assumption. It seems that people's intuitions about whether an entity has a mind arise through a complex collection of factors that we would not ordinarily have suspected."
